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# Evaluation at the Georgia Health Policy Center

The Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) focuses on solutions to complex issues facing health and health care today by conducting, analyzing, and disseminating evaluation findings to connect decision makers with the objective research and guidance needed to make informed decisions about health policies and programs.

Evaluation is a formalized approach to studying the goals, processes, and impacts of projects, policies, and programs. The GHPC employs an innovative and tested operational approach to all of its evaluation projects. Our approach places emphasis on building relationships that deepen trust and encourage candor among all stakeholder groups in order to establish a functional rapport and maximize impact. A key component to our evaluation approach is that clients work in partnership with the GHPC and are able to quickly apply findings to their work.

## Framework

Our signature style of evaluation is based upon a synthesis of practical and methodological insights from a broad range of policy evaluation, community-based research, technical assistance, and capacity-building experience with project-specific expertise. This process ensures an evaluation process that is crafted and executed through a relationship with those who will ultimately apply the findings.

Using this approach and the evaluation framework created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the GHPC has assembled a team of researchers whose experiences form the collaborative design and execution of our evaluations.

### Evaluation Framework<sup>1</sup>

Engage Stakeholders	Creation of an advisory committee that will oversee the evaluation
Describe the Program	Development of a comprehensive program description used to clarify all the components and intended outcomes of the program
Focus on Evaluation Design	Determination of the most important evaluation questions and the appropriate design for the evaluation
Gather Credible Evidence	The collected evidence depends upon stakeholder input and a final decision about evaluation design
Justify Conclusions	Data analysis and synthesis and a justification of the claims by comparing the evidence against the value held by an advisory committee member
Ensure Use and Shared Lessons Learned	The purpose identified early in the evaluation process will guide the use of the evaluation and may be used to identify ways to improve the program or even to demonstrate to funders or other stakeholders that resources are being well spent and that the program is effective

## Purpose

The GHPC approaches evaluation as a critical intersection between research and programs that can improve health. Decision-makers may use research to inform their policies, which, in turn, are often implemented in the form of programs. Evaluating these programs can contribute to the improvement of individual programs, the research literature at large, and the broader policy environment.

The GHPC conducts evaluations to:

- Assess impact
- Contribute to existing knowledge
- Stimulate program and process improvement

## Standards

The GHPC holds itself to rigorous standards set forth by the American Evaluation Association (AEA). Following these standards ensures that our method of evaluation is tailored to the individual needs and expectations of the organizations and people who will make decisions based on our conclusions. The findings create powerful learning opportunities that refine and sustain projects seeking to improve well-being. The standards are:

- **Systematic Inquiry:** Conduct systematic, data based inquiries;
- **Competence:** Provide competent performance to stakeholders;
- **Integrity/Honesty:** Display honesty and integrity in all behaviors, and work diligently to provide same for the entire process;
- **Respect for People:** Respect security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and all other stakeholders;
- **Responsibility for General and Public Welfare:** Articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to the evaluation.

## Project Examples

### PeachCare for Kids™ & Medicaid Program Evaluation

The GHPC has worked with the Georgia Department of Community Health to conduct the annual evaluation of the state's Children's Health Insurance Program, PeachCare for Kids™, for more than a decade. The GHPC provides on-going program and policy evaluation support including annual reports to meet Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements and additional research projects which have included stakeholder surveys and



statistical modeling to measure enrollment and cost impacts of proposed and implemented policy changes, in addition to assessing the quality of care received by enrolled children.

### Evaluation Services in Support of Alzheimer's Disease Innovation Programs

The GHPC is working with the Division of Aging Services, Georgia Department of Human Services to evaluate their Alzheimer's Disease Innovation Program. This program, awarded by the federal Administration on Aging, involves the implementation of multiple interventions to improve the system that provides services to those with early Alzheimer's disease and their families. The GHPC is evaluating the outcomes of specific interventions.

The team conducts analyses of trainings for members of law enforcement, information and referral specialists with the Area Agencies on Aging, Adult Protective Services staff and others. In addition, interviews are conducted with participants in a counseling program for persons with early-stage Alzheimer's to understand the helpfulness of the intervention.